



Very few events in life create more stress than moving.

Many consumers prefer to enlist the services of a professional moving company. The Household Moving Services Act, Chapter 507, Florida Statutes, requires intrastate moving companies and moving brokers to be registered with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services prior to conducting business. Consumers who decide to use a professional mover should do some advance planning and research to protect themselves from unnecessary expense.

Florida requires movers to do the following:

- ▶ Provide a written estimate covering the total costs of the move.
- ▶ Provide a written contract before performing any services.
- ▶ Disclose limitation of liability in writing at the time the estimate or contract for services are rendered.
- ▶ Accept a minimum of two of the following three forms of payment:
 - **Cash, cashier's check, money order, traveler's check**
 - **Valid personal check**
 - **Valid credit card**

Some other moving tips include:



Plan Ahead When Possible – Have at least three companies provide estimates with an on-site visit. Avoid companies that are only willing to do an estimate over the phone or internet.



Do Your Homework – Research whether the company is registered and if any complaints have been filed against them. Visit **FloridaConsumerHelp.com** or call **1-800-HELP-FLA** or **1-800-FL-AYUDA** en Español for more information.



Read Before You Sign – Remember, the contract and estimate must be signed and dated by both parties; your signature indicates that you acknowledge and accept its terms. Read the entire contract and estimate thoroughly, ask questions, and do not sign it if you have doubts about anything.



Be Aware of Hostage Move Scams - Scams can occur whether you are dealing directly with a moving company or using a broker. One such scam occurs when a moving company quotes a low price in order to secure your business, then

increases the cost substantially after loading your household goods onto the truck. If you refuse to
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pay, the company will hold your belongings hostage until you comply. Keep a copy of your contract with you during the move to be able to show law enforcement if necessary. It is a third degree felony for a mover to refuse to relinquish your household goods if law enforcement has determined you have tendered payment in the amount of the written estimate or contract.



Make complaints in writing - Consumers who are not satisfied should make the mover aware of their claim, in writing, as quickly as possible. If the company does not handle your claim satisfactorily, you may also file a complaint at **FloridaConsumerHelp.com**.

Important questions to ask before you sign a contract with a moving company:

- What is the moving company's license number?
- How long has the company been in business?
- What is the company's business address?
- Does the company have any complaints on file?
- What type of protection does the company offer against loss or damage?
- Does the company have a good reputation for settling claims?
- Does the company offer arbitration for claim disputes?
- Does the company have a good record of meeting its delivery schedules?
- Can the company provide proof of workers' compensation coverage, general and legal liability coverage?
- Does the company offer extra services, such as packing, unpacking and storage?
- Does the company have its own warehouse if a customer needs to store items?

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit **FloridaConsumerHelp.com** or call **1-800-HELP-FLA (435-7352)** or **1-800-FL-AYUDA (352-9832)** en Español.



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